



The Insider

www.senate.michigan.gov/switalski

Inside State Politics with State Senator Mickey Switalski Senate District 10

August 1, 2008

Welcome to the electronic version of *The Insider*. I would like to take the opportunity to thank you for your support and giving me an opportunity to represent you in the Michigan Senate. It is my sincere hope that this bi-weekly e-newsletter will keep you informed of the happenings in Lansing while staying true to the traditional style of *The Insider*. If you would like to contact me, please feel free to e-mail me at senmswitalski@senate.michigan.gov or call me at my Roseville or Lansing office. You can also meet me in person during my constituent hours, coming to a location near you. Call my office and make an appointment or just walk in. See schedule for details.

Mickey's Blog: Notes and Updates

VAN DYKE TO BE RESURFACED

Many residents in the district have written and called me to express their anger and frustration over the current condition of Van Dyke Avenue (M-53) in Sterling Heights. There is good news as relief is on the way. On July 31st, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) announced that it will provide funding, under the state Transportation Economic Development Fund (TEDF) Category A grant, to resurface a three-mile portion of M-53 between 15 Mile and 18 Mile Roads.

Enacted by the Michigan Legislature in 1987, the Transportation Economic Development Fund supports highway, road, and street projects necessary to support economic growth and business development. The Category A or "Target Industries Program" is aimed specifically at making transportation improvements to encourage private investments in Michigan that create or retain jobs.

The cost of the road improvements is \$1.9 million, with \$1.5 million in TEDF Category A funds. The local match includes \$233,750 from the city of Sterling Heights, and \$140,250 from the MDOT Metro Region.

LEGISLATURE PASSES K-12 SCHOOL BUDGET

I joined my colleagues on both sides of the aisle on July 17th to show support for Michigan schools and the students who are the future of this state by passing the 2008-2009 K-12/School Aid Budget. The budget included an increase in per pupil funding of between \$56 and \$112 on a sliding scale.

Other highlights of the FY 2009 School Aid Budget include a \$10 million increase in funding for Early Childhood programs, and a \$1 million increase for Child and Adolescent Health Centers.

These increases will help ensure that every school in Michigan starts off the school year able to budget and prepared for a successful year.

LEGISLATURE PASSES GENERAL GOVERNMENT BUDGET, LOCAL REVENUE SHARING INCREASE

The Michigan Senate also passed the General Government budget on July 24th that includes an increase in statutory revenue sharing. The two-percent increase will help support local communities and strengthen local police and fire protection services to ensure public safety programs for our neighborhoods.

The increase in revenue sharing is the first in seven years. Besides public safety, local communities rely on this funding for water systems, road maintenance and other vital services.

HOMEOWNERS WHO HAVE MOVED CAN STILL FILE FOR EXTRA PRINCIPAL RESIDENCE EXEMPTION

Under Public Act 96 of 2008, which was signed into law earlier this year, a new tax break was created for people who have moved to a new residence but have been unable to sell their previous principal residence. Under the new law, a homeowner may maintain a principal residence exemption on his or her former home for up to three years as long as the home remains vacant and up for sale. In order to receive this tax break, the owner must file a conditional rescission form with their local assessor. Unfortunately, because the bill was not signed into law until April of this year, that left only a small window of time for taxpayers to file with their assessors before 2008's May 1 deadline.

The good news is that an amendment recently included in another bill, Senate Bill 1239, now allows homeowners who missed the May 1 deadline to appeal to the July and December Boards of Review to ask to maintain their principal residence exemptions. Homeowners who think they may be eligible for this tax break are encouraged to visit the Michigan Treasury's website for a form they can file with their local unit of government to request to be considered at their July or December Board of Review meeting.

Taxpayers should contact their local government to be sure they know when their Board of Review will meet. Visit <http://www.michigan.gov/treasury> for more information.

LEGISLATION TO PROTECT GREAT LAKES SIGNED INTO LAW

Governor Granholm recently signed into law a package of bills designed to protect and preserve the Great Lakes during a ceremony on the shores of Lake Michigan. This legislation is the most comprehensive in the Great Lakes region and included ratification of the Great Lakes Water Resources Compact, establishing regulatory standards for large water withdrawals and banning significant diversions of Michigan water.

Michigan's new regulations develop a permitting system for large water users who may impact local streams. The permitting system should help us protect our streams from harm as well as encourage the efficient use of water and ensure opportunities for economic growth that result from a wide use of our water resources. The legislation also would implement a free, web-based assessment tool that predicts the effects of any groundwater withdrawal on local streams, saving water users time and money as they plan withdrawals. The regulations will help us guarantee that water usage will not harm our streams and rivers and also forms a workgroup of stakeholders from the environmental, business, and other communities to continually evaluate the effects of our new water regulations. The continuing work will improve the efficiency of the regulations while protecting our precious natural resources.

While this legislation is not perfect, it is a large step forward that should make all of Michigan proud. My colleagues from across the aisle and I worked together to reach a compromise that environmental, agricultural and business interests could all agree on. The Great Lakes are extremely valuable to Michigan's economy and people, and by enacting this legislation we have taken a huge step toward protecting our Great Lakes resources for generations to come.

Coffee Hours

In response to requests from constituents, I have added coffee hours in Roseville and during the daytime. Here are my next scheduled coffee hours. Please feel to stop on by or make an appointment by calling my office.

September 29, 2008 1:30-2:30 p.m. Location: Biggby Coffee (26740 Gratiot, south of I-696) Roseville	October 30, 2008 7-8 p.m. Location: Clinton-Macomb Public Library (35891 South Gratiot) Clinton Township
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Mickey's TV Insider Show

Check out my TV Insider Show coming to a television station near you. Watch me interview local guests about politics, life, issues and concerns to our district.

Sterling Heights

Every Saturday and Sunday at 1 p.m.
(Comcast Channel 5/WOW Channel 10)

Utica

Every Wednesday at 9 a.m.
(Comcast Channel 5/WOW Channel 10)

Clinton Township

Last week of every month- Sat thru Thurs
(Comcast Channel 5/WOW Channel 10)

Roseville

Various Times-check local listings
(Comcast Channel 18/WOW Channel 10)

Contact My Office

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